PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION FORMED TO OVERTURN AMENDMENT 2

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado, December 10, 1992 -- A group of community activists announced today the formation of a grassroots organization to direct local efforts to secure and maintain basic civil rights for gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens. Calling itself, **GROUND ZERO**, the group was formed after several town meetings indicated a need for a Colorado Springs-based political effort to overturn Amendment 2.

GROUND ZERO seeks to focus national attention on the implications of Amendment 2. "Since Colorado Springs was the birthplace of Amendment 2, we see ourselves as ground zero in the fight against the discrimination it condones," said Sam Broomall, Jr., a spokesperson for **GROUND ZERO**. Invited speaker, Robert Bray, speaking at a recent Colorado Springs Town Meeting, called Amendment 2 "the beginning of gay ethnic cleansing." Bray is Media Director for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

GROUND ZERO will offer its support and the benefit of its experiences in Colorado Springs to gay rights' groups in other states facing Colorado-style amendments. The backers of Amendment 2, Colorado for Family Values (CFV), are actively supporting such amendments in several other states.

GROUND ZERO stands in full support of the growing national boycott of Colorado. **GROUND ZERO** feels the boycott will focus attention on what transpired in Colorado and will encourage voters in other states to reject Colorado-style amendments. **GROUND ZERO** believes special attention should be given to boycotting Colorado Springs. "People should remember that Colorado Springs is ground zero. This is where it all started," said Bruce Loeffler, another **GROUND ZERO** spokesperson and professor at Colorado College.

A primary strategy of **GROUND ZERO** will be education. "Amendment 2 passed because people believed the 'special rights' rhetoric. This is not about special rights, it is about discrimination that denies *equal* rights," said Mel Berwin, chairperson of the Education Committee.

Although billed as prohibiting special rights, the amendment states that homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation may not constitute the basis of a claim of discrimination. This clause in the amendment will be used to deny gays, lesbians and bisexuals jobs, housing, and public accommodation-- **GROUND ZERO** sees these as fundamental civil rights. Amendment 2 may also be used to discriminate against anyone, on the assumption or accusation, they are gay. Such tactics were used in 1935 Germany when anti-homosexual laws were used to target political opponents.

The main focus of the education effort will be to counter the grossly inaccurate and fear-inducing campaign used by CFV in support of Amendment 2. **GROUND ZERO** believes it is dangerous to let such misinformation remain unchallenged.

The education effort will also involve a religious outreach program to moderate the intolerant position of the religious right in Colorado Springs. **GROUND ZERO** will encourage discussion of civil rights issues within local churches in an attempt to defuse the religious right's position that gays are undeserving of civil rights protection. "Part of our mission is to reach out to the religious community to uncover the deception and misinformation promoted by the radical, fundamentalist right regarding homosexuality," said Alan Cook, chairperson of the Religious Outreach committee and a Colorado Springs psychotherapist.

GROUND ZERO will be sponsoring a march on Colorado Springs in late Spring. The march will be modelled after the national march on Washington scheduled for April 25, 1993.

GROUND ZERO intends to continue its efforts to focus national attention on Colorado Springs until Amendment 2 is overturned.

For more information contact:

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FACT SHEET
GROUND ZERO

GROUND ZERO is a grassroots organization consisting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and gay supportive people. The mission of the organization is to secure and maintain basic civil rights for gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens and to promote full participation of gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens in the community at large.

GROUND ZERO is a loosely structured organization. Direction is provided by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from focus groups. The focus groups with a public mission are described below.

Education - Work to encourage a greater understanding of the legal and psychological implications of Amendment 2. Work to educate the public on the manipulative and deceptive techniques employed by CFV.

Religious Outreach - Work with local churches and religious organizations to educate them on gay issues. Uncover and correct the deceptive portrayal of homosexuals as presented by the fundamentalist Christian right.

Political - Work with elected officials to keep them informed of **GROUND ZERO**'s plans, enlist their help and support. Plan direct action campaigns.

Media - Coordinate contact with local, state and national media. Monitor media coverage to ensure Amendment 2 and gay civil rights issues are fairly presented.

Minority Outreach - Work with local minority groups to forge an effective coalition to fight all types of oppression. We recognize that our quest for social justice fundamentally links us to the struggle against racism, sexism, class bias, economic injustice and religious intolerance.

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P.O. Box 1982
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FACT SHEET
Amendment 2

Amendment 2 was passed in Colorado by a 53%-47% margin on November 3, 1992. The text of Amendment 2 follows:

> NO PROTECTED STATUS BASED ON HOMOSEXUAL, LESBIAN OR BISEXUAL ORIENTATION: Neither the State of Colorado, through any of its branches or departments, nor any of its agencies, political subdivisions, municipalities or school districts, shall enact, adopt or enforce any statute, regulation, ordinance or policy whereby homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, conduct, practices or relationships shall constitute or otherwise be the basis of or entitle any person or class of persons to have or claim any minority status, quota preferences, protected status or claim of discrimination.

Amendment 2 is due to go into effect on the first business day of January 1993. Governor Romer's signature is required for Amendment 2 to become law.

The amendment was placed on the ballot by a Colorado Springs group, Colorado for Family Values (CFV). A similar, more harshly worded, ballot measure failed in Oregon in the November general election. Other states targeted for Colorado-style amendments include: Washington, Ohio, Idaho, Minnesota, Maine, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon and Florida.

The fight against Amendment 2 was led by EPOC (Equal Protection of Colorado), Inc. EPOC has since disbanded and has been replaced by Equality Colorado, **GROUND ZERO** and other groups.

El Paso country, home to Colorado Springs, voted almost 3-1 in favor of the passage of Amendment 2. Denver, Boulder and Aspen all voted against Amendment 2. These cities currently have non-discrimination ordinances which include sexual orientation. These ordinances will be overturned when Amendment 2 goes into effect.

CLIP (Colorado Legal Initiative Project) has filed a suit in District Court in an attempt to find Amendment 2 unconstitutional. The case is based on the abridgement of the U.S Constitution's equal protection clause, the vagueness of the implications of amendment and the usurping of home rule powers as guaranteed by the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

There is also a bill in the U.S. Senate, S574, which would add sexual orientation to the 1964 Civil Rights Acts. This bill would supercede the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

If neither the CLIP effort nor S574 succeeds, the soonest Colorado voters would have an opportunity to repeal Amendment 2 is November 1993.

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COLORADO SPRINGS
GAZETTE TELEGRAPH
ESTABLISHED IN 1872
FREEDOM NEWSPAPERS

EDITORIAL

Oct 27 '92

Vote 'Yes' on Amendment 2

Gays and lesbians, like everyone else in Colorado, today enjoy the full range of rights recognized under the U.S. and Colorado constitutions. Only a handful of citizens in Colorado would want to deny these basic rights to people who practice homosexuality.

Amendment 2 on next week's ballot is not about taking away those rights. It is about preventing the homosexual lobby from gaining recognition as a protected minority, which would allow homosexuals to force their lifestyle and agenda on unwilling people.

If passed, Amendment 2 would prohibit enactment of any so-called gay rights laws in Colorado, either at the state or the local level. It would repeal existing gay rights laws in Boulder, Denver and Aspen, and would overturn an executive order banning discrimination against homosexuals in the hiring of state employees.

When the opponents of Amendment 2 charge that it would "legalize discrimination," we should remember that gay rights laws are the exception in Colorado, not the rule. Currently only 20 percent of state residents live in cities with gay rights ordinances. The other 80 percent of us live in cities and counties that grant no special rights to people based on their sex lives.

Passage of Amendment 2 would not change the legal status of homosexuals for any of those areas that are not now covered by gay rights laws. When advocates of gay rights attack Amendment 2 as legalized discrimination and a denial of basic civil rights, they are really attacking the status quo in four-fifths of our state.

It's a myth that the lack of special rights leaves homosexuals vulnerable to widespread employment discrimination. A whole shelf full of case law has emerged over the years that discourages employers from firing anybody — homosexuals included — without a cause related to job performance.

If a homosexual in Colorado Springs or Grand Junction is fired simply because he or she sleeps with someone of the same sex, the fired employee would be able to argue in court that they were "wrongfully discharged" — just as anyone else could.

If Amendment 2 passes, this legal safety net would still apply to homosexuals. Amendment 2 does not deny them the right to sue for wrongful discharge as long as they can show they were fired for reasons not related to job performance.

It's also a myth that gay rights are just an extension of laws that discourage discrimination based on race or gender. The U.S. military, which was one of the first institutions in America to ban racial discrimination, continues to maintain a policy of discharging known homosexuals.

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explained the difference succinctly in an interview this summer. "Skin color is a benign, non-behavioral characteristic," Powell said. "Sexual orientation is perhaps the most profound of human behavioral characteristics. Comparison of the two is a convenient but invalid argument."

Another faulty argument against Amendment 2 is that it would infringe on "local control." Local control is a valid principle as long as basic rights and freedoms are not at stake. Gay rights, however, force people to accept and condone homosexuality even though it might violate their most deeply held religious and moral beliefs.

Gay rights laws could force some organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, a church school or a home for troubled teens, to hire homosexuals even though to do so would go against the policies of those organizations. Such laws could also force landlords to rent to gays, even if the apartment is in their own home.

The Colorado Civil Rights Commission already has recommended that a statewide gay rights law be passed, a move that would trample the "local control" of the vast majority of Colorado cities and counties that have so far rejected the alien notion of gay rights laws. One of the most compelling reasons to pass Amendment 2 is that it would head off this movement to impose a gay rights law on all of Colorado.

We're convinced that the majority of people in Colorado do not hate, fear or harbor ill will toward people who practice homosexuality. But neither does the majority accept the notion that homosexuality is a morally neutral act and that homosexuals are just another minority group deserving special status under the law.

Homosexuals today enjoy the same basic legal and constitutional rights as anyone else in Colorado. Amendment 2 would simply prevent them from gaining a special, protected status that would allow homosexuals to infringe on the rights of others.

To prevent the imposition of gay rights laws in Colorado, vote "Yes" on Amendment 2.

Amendment 2/ Many gays are afraid, angry

11/5/92

From A1

of the state never had that protection in the first place.

Still, a wave of panic ran through the gay community. A local psychotherapist who counsels gays said he received 30 phone calls Wednesday from agitated clients. "A couple went into a suicidal mode, and some just get angry," said therapist Alan Cook. "This hits the gay community in one of its most sensitive areas — the acceptance area."

Many gays refused to believe the vote was a mandate against homosexuality. They said they hoped the surprise vote was the result of confusion.

Judging from at least one exit poll conducted by a New York polling firm, that may be the case. At least one-fourth of the voters who supported Amendment 2 also said they believed gays should be protected from discrimination in housing and employment.

But a Denver pollster attributed that contradiction less to confusion and more to Colorado for Family Values' message of "special rights."

"This whole idea that we've become a society with a profusion of rights but no responsibilities is a view not just coming from conservatives but is broadly held by the middle class," said Floyd Ciruli. By tapping into that sentiment, Colorado for Family Values wooed the angry independent voters.

Stunned by defeat, opponents turned their energies into a court challenge. Local activists, joined by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Washington, D.C.-based gay rights group the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund have been researching the issue since June.

They announced their plans Wednesday in front of a Denver church packed with 750 people. The group will challenge the amendment on several grounds — including the separation of church and state and First Amendment rights. But its strongest claim, says ACLU attorney Ruth Harlow, is that it violates the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution.

"What this amendment does is create a special category for gay men and lesbians so they are

Backlash from Amendment 2's passage begins

By **Angela Dire**
Gazette Telegraph

Gays all over the nation retaliated against Colorado on Wednesday for its unprecedented decision to ban laws that protect homosexuals from discrimination.

A coalition of state and national leaders quickly unveiled plans for a constitutional challenge of Amendment 2, the measure championed by conservative Christians and solidly favored by Colorado voters in Tuesday's election.

A national organization of gay physicians canceled plans to hold its annual convention in Denver. And a hastily organized Los Angeles group — Coloradans & Californians for Fairness in the Nation — called upon artists, entertainers and tourists to boycott Colorado.

"The eyes of the whole nation are on Colorado Springs," said Phil Lobel, the group's founder and owner of a public relations firm. "The entertainment community is not going to see this go by without a fight."

There was no denying that Colorado for Family Values, a Colorado Springs-based group that drafted Amendment 2, had scored a decisive victory among mainstream voters. The measure swept all but 15 of Colorado's 63 counties and won 54 percent of the vote.

Buoyed by success, group leaders said they planned to find a permanent office. They said they had no plans to carry their campaign to a national level.

But, said Colorado Springs car dealer Will Perkins, "If we can offer guidance and direction, we'd be happy to do that."

Perkins, one of the group's leaders, said there was no reason for gays to fear the group's intentions.

But in Colorado Springs, many do — even though nothing has changed for them legally. The amendment overturned laws in Denver, Boulder and Aspen that protected gays from discrimination. But gays in the rest

See **AMENDMENT 2**/A3

Smiley N. Pool/Gazette Tele

Opponents of Amendment 2 march to the state Capito about 1:30 Wednesday morning after learning that the posal had passed. A coalition of state and national lea plans a constitutional challenge.

HOW OTHER MEASURES FARED

Here are results of voting Tuesday on other gay rights measures across the nation:

TAMPA, Fla.: Repeal of gay-rights ordinance. Approved 58.5 percent to 41.5 percent.

PORTLAND, Maine: Repeal of gay-rights ordinance. Defeated 57 percent to 43 percent.

OREGON: Declaration of homosexuality as abnormal. Defeated 57 percent to 43 percent.

taken out of the normal political process," she says.

During the meeting, Gov. Roy Romer and Denver Mayor Wellington Webb vowed to support the fight. "Colorado is not a state of prejudice and hate," Romer said.

Amendment 2 supporters said they welcomed a court challenge. "This amendment was drawn by constitutional attorneys," said Perkins. "They knew very well it would have to face scrutiny."

Opponents are expected to challenge the measure in Denver District Court by early next week. But in the meantime, gay activists are pulling on the state's economic strings in retaliation.

The 750-member San Francisco-based American Association of Physicians for Human Rights rescheduled its Denver meeting planned for August. "This is going to be the first of many such cancellations," said executive director Benjamin Schatz. "Any state that actively sanctions discrimination should expect that well-intended people will not want to visit or spend their money there."

In Colorado Springs, more than 100 gays and Amendment 2 opponents held a candlelight protest vigil Wednesday in Acacia Park. Earlier in the day, Colorado College students marched to the courthouse.

Supporters also called on the federal government to protect homosexuals. Rep. Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., faxed a letter to President-elect Bill Clinton, urging him to fight for legislation that would

A sign protesting Amendment 2 is altered to show a demonstrator's feelings about the passage of the proposal.

amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation. Clinton has said he supports the measure.

"I will fight aggressively with you in the 103rd Congress for its passage," Schroeder wrote, "because, in Colorado, we have no time to waste."